

Dairy Farmers Encouraged to Access the USDA Dairy Margin Coverage Program and State Reimbursement Program

Deadline to apply for 2023 DMC coverage is December 9, 2022

By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The deadline is approaching to enroll in the 2023 USDA Dairy Margin Coverage Program (DMC). The Vermont Legislature approved \$2,600,000 to reimburse Vermont dairy farmers enrolled in the DMC for 2022 and 2023. The reimbursement program is currently underway and estimates DMC reimbursement allocated to-date for 2022 at \$1,500,000. It is estimated that there will be \$1,100,000 remaining to provide reimbursement for the Tier I premiums in calendar year 2023.

USDA has announced the sign up for the 2023 Dairy Margin Coverage Program with a deadline for



enrollment as December 9th, 2022. All interested dairy farmers should contact their county USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office as soon as possible.

The USDA Dairy Margin

Coverage web site Decision Tool has been updated with 2023 forecasting; accordingly, DMC Program payments are forecast for 2023. “The Dairy Margin Coverage Program is an important tool for all

Vermont Dairy Farmers to manage risk,” stated Vermont Secretary of Agriculture, Anson Tebbetts. “The reimbursement program from the State of Vermont makes the DMC even more attractive.”

State Executive Director of USDA Farm Services Agency, John Roberts stated, “Dairy Margin Coverage Program can help all dairy farmers manage milk price and feed cost risks.” The sign-up period is open until December 9, 2022, and all farmers should contact their USDA Farm Services Agency Office for more information.

Here are further specifics of the state reimbursement program:

- The milk producer is in good standing with the Agency of

*continued on page 7*

AGRiVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

116 State Street

Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2901

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org

US Postage

PAID

Permit #10

White River Jct VT

Inside This Issue

The View from 116 State Street . . . . .

Page 2

Sunsetting VT Hemp Program . . . . .

Page 3

DBIC: Healthy Roots Collaborative . . . . .

Page 4

DBIC Funding . . . . .

Page 4

Trade Show Assistance Grants . . . . .

Page 5

Food System Plan: Poultry . . . . .

Page 6

Produce Safety Training. . . . .

Page 8

Armstrong Farm . . . . .

Page 9

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News . . . . .

Page 10

Classifieds . . . . .

Page 11

White Rock Farm. . . . .

Page 12

Working Lands Grant . . . . .

Page 13

Young Farmer’s Take on Vermont Agriculture . . . . .

Page 14

Farm and Forestland Cost Share . . . . .

Page 15

Fantastic Farmer . . . . .

Page 16

# All the Best: Vermont Holiday Trees and Gifts

As 2022 draws to a close, we have so many choices as to how we celebrate the season. Many Vermonters will visit a local tree farm to select a holiday tree. Vermont's Christmas Tree growers cultivate and care for trees over a period of years, pruning, trimming, and nurturing the tree for that special moment. Customers appreciate wandering through rows of trees to select the perfect tree for their home and return with a fresh tree to trim for the holidays. To add to the festivities, many of Vermont's Christmas Tree farms offer special events with refreshments, visits with Santa and his reindeer, and music. You can find listings of Vermont's

tree farms by visiting: <https://www.nh-vtchristmastree.org/choose.php> or <https://vtchristmastrees.org/members-list>

Some Vermont Christmas Tree farms ship trees and wreaths around the country, offering the opportunity to send a bit of the Green Mountains to friends and loved ones so they can experience a Vermont Christmas. What a treat to have a fresh Vermont tree arrive at your home! You also might pick up your tree at a farmstand or retail store or purchase a tree to support a local fundraiser. Many local businesses get their trees from a Vermont Christmas Tree farm. Supporting a local tree farmer is a great way to contribute to Vermont's working landscape.

There is also a wholesale market for Vermont trees – perhaps you've seen trucks loaded with Christmas

Trees heading south. Vermont tree farmers sell trees and holiday wreaths in large urban and suburban tree markets around the country. Access to these markets is helpful to Vermont tree farmers, allowing them to reach new audiences who appreciate a fresh, Vermont tree or wreath.

December is a busy month for others who are working making a living off the land. Thousands of products will be shipped around the country arriving at homes and businesses during the month of giving. Sending maple, cheese, crackers, jams, jellies, sauces, meat, and specialty products as gifts, supports small businesses across

Vermont. Ordering online is an easy way to send a gift to a friend or loved one while supporting local agriculture, and many producers offer convenient gift packs and easily personalized boxes. If you like to shop in person, farmstands, producers and retailers are packed with Vermont gifts. We are grateful to have so many choices of quality products here in Vermont.

We at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture thank you for a busy and productive 2022. We are gearing up for 2023 but before the calendar turns, we will give thanks to our farmers who feed us, support our land and water and make Vermont a special place to live, work and play.

CONNECT  
WITH US



@VTAGENCYOFAG



AGRIVIEW

(UPS 009-700)

Agriview is Vermont's Agricultural Publication of Record.

It is published monthly by the  
Vermont Agency of  
Agriculture Food & Markets,  
116 State Street,  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Telephone: 802-828-1619

[www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov](http://www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov)

ANSON TEBBETTS, Secretary  
Agency of Agriculture,  
Food & Markets

TERRY SMITH  
Editor

FAITH RAYMOND, Managing Editor

SCOTT WATERMAN, Contributing Editor

Advertising and subscriptions:

E-mail: [agriview@vermont.gov](mailto:agriview@vermont.gov)

The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity/  
Affirmative Action Employer and Provider.

## This Month's Recipe

### Maple Roasted Beets and Carrots

*So beautiful and so delicious.*

#### Ingredients

- 5 large carrots peeled & sliced
- 4 medium beets peeled & diced
- 2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons pure maple syrup

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425F and move the rack to the middle position.
2. Cut the beets and carrots into pieces that are roughly the same size.
3. Place the pieces on a large



4. Drizzle the oil onto the beets and carrots and add salt & pepper. Toss

- until they're coated. Spread them out in an even layer.
5. Roast for about 15 minutes, or until they veggies are tender-crisp (this will vary depending how big the pieces are).
6. Take the baking sheet out of the oven and add the butter and maple syrup directly to the baking sheet. Let the butter melt then toss it again until everything is coated.
7. Return the baking sheet to the oven for another 5 minutes.
8. Serve immediately.



# Sunsetting of Vermont's Hemp Program and the Transitioning to the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program

*From the VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets*

This is the final year that the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (Agency) will administer the Vermont Hemp Program, including the Vermont Hemp Rules and under its USDA approved Domestic Hemp Production Plan. The Agency approved its first registration to cultivate hemp in 2013. That first year the Agency registered 174 acres.

In 2014 the Farm Bill passed allowing states to enact pilot programs to “study the growth, cultivation, or marketing” of hemp. The Agency operated a pilot program through December of 2021 to a 1% total THC standard, participated in the federal rulemaking process, and advocated for federal policy changes in support of sensible regulation that allows, and even encourages, states to foster and help grow a sustainable U.S. hemp industry.

By 2019 Vermont saw an explosion of hemp cultivated for the production, development and marketing of hemp products containing cannabinoids. The Hemp Program, in 2020, enacted regulations to protect consumers that included requirements to test for contaminants and labeling of products. These rules set the stage for compliance with the federal final rule for a U. S. Domestic Hemp Production Program that became effective in March of 2021. As the sunset on the pilot program, Vermont prepared and submitted a state plan for USDA approval to employ federal requirements for the 0.3% total THC standard, federal reporting, and incorporating performance based sampling



protocols that exempted fiber and grain growers and research institutions. In its final year of administering a hemp program, the Agency registered just over 161 acres with most crops being grown for cannabinoid production on small acreages. Vermont is also beginning to see potential in hemp fiber cultivation and processing. Many of Vermont's hemp businesses employ Vermonters to support their operations, and market hemp products across the country.

## What's Next?

Growers who register to cultivate hemp in 2023 will do so with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Many of the same requirements in place in 2022

will remain applicable in 2023 for Vermont growers despite licensure with the federal government. These include requirements for criminal history reports, reporting crops to the Farm Service Agency, using certified samplers, and meeting the total THC standard of 0.3%. Additionally, hemp cultivation will continue to be regulated under applicable state laws, including the Required Agricultural Practices, and Pesticide Rules. If you operate a nursery, you still need to get a nursery license; or if you manufacture animal dosage form animal health products containing CBD, you will need to register those products. The Agency does not expect there to be any changes to access to banking and insurance for

hemp industry participants.

Hemp growers and processors will still be able to apply for relevant state funds to support their businesses. These include Working Lands Enterprise Funds, and federal funds from the Agricultural Management Assistance Program offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, or those offered through USDA, Rural Development. Lands and buildings used in the production of hemp may be enrolled in the Current Use program when the operation meets eligibility requirements. There are no changes in access to these programs based on the transition to USDA administration of hemp production in Vermont. Opportunities will continue to exist for businesses that grew up under Vermont's Hemp Program and new businesses that seek for find their place.

Nationally, 2023 is the year Congress will revise or renew agricultural and food policy in what is commonly known as the farm bill. The hemp industry may see changes in federal policies affecting their businesses, so stay tuned.

The best place for information on becoming registered with USDA is to go to <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/hemp>.

Growers in 2023 will need to create accounts in the Hemp eManagement Platform, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/hemp/hemp-emanagement-platform>.

There is a user guide for producers, USDA Producer HeMP User Guide (pdf), to help you navigate the federal registration system. If producers have questions about hemp production in 2023, contact USDA at, [FarmBill.Hemp@usda.gov](mailto:FarmBill.Hemp@usda.gov).

## DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

### Grantee Spotlight

# Healthy Roots Collaborative Brings Value to Value-Added Dairy Farmers

By Katie Spring, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Three Vermont dairy farms are receiving sales, marketing, and product development support through Healthy Roots Collaborative (HRC), a program of Northwest Regional Planning Commission thanks to the Dairy Business Viability & Technical Assistance Grant.

Funded by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, this grant coordinates technical assistance to benefit multiple dairy producers and with the goal of increasing consumption, sales, and diverse markets for regionally produced dairy products.

Christine Porcaro,



Lauren Gitlin, owner of Villa Villekulla Farm

business advisor at HRC, along with Blair Johnson of Freedom Unity Craft Consulting, are working with Stony Pond Farm, Aires Hill Farm & Creamery, and Villa Villekulla Farm thanks to the grant.

Christine brought her sales and marketing expertise to Villa Villekulla Farm, where owner Lauren Gitlin runs a micro goat dairy making skyr and butter. The two focused on cost of production and price point,

as well as opportunities for distribution.

“Christine has helped me drill down into the numbers and what they mean and helped me look at how my business can be more efficient while building toward sustainability and maintaining my values,” Lauren said. The NE-DBIC grant created the first building block in business sustainability with sales and marketing assistance, and it’s also helped Lauren access other resources she’s excited to engage with.

“One of the great opportunities born out of this grant has been connecting Lauren to the Center for an Agricultural Economy to enroll in the Vermont Farm Viability program,” Christine said.

There she’ll be able to build a more holistic version of her business with her core values.

On top of that, Christine notes, “Knowing there are [NE-DBIC] grants in the future, it helps us look out for funding for equipment and other TA needs. It becomes a great starting point for developing relationships and seeing what other resources can be brought in to make a farm business viable.”

To learn more about upcoming grant projects, visit the NE-DBIC website at [agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic). For information related to this specific grant, contact Julia Scheier at [julia.scheier@vermont.gov](mailto:julia.scheier@vermont.gov) or by phone 802-522-7042.

## NE-DBIC Funding Opportunities Roundup

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

December’s a buzzing time for funding opportunities through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. Hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, The NE-DBIC has exciting opportunities for dairy farmers, processors, and producer associations. Check our website for more

information about upcoming grants: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants>.

### Open for Applications:

The Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant offers support to dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to improve the safety of dairy products. Awards will range from \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% required match commitment. Applications are

due by January 19th, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. EST.

The Dairy Farm Innovation Grant will fund dairy farms to undertake projects across farm production and business operations that support community- and climate-forward production. This grant will range from \$10,000 to \$75,000 with a 25% match commitment required. Applications are due February 2nd, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. EST.

### Upcoming Opportunities for Dairy Processors:

The Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant will fund projects focused on acquiring specialized equipment needed to increase the processing capacity of regionally produced milk and other activities, supporting expansion to meet demand. Applications will be available in January 2023.

### The Dairy Processor

Innovation Grant program offers \$1 million in funding to enable dairy processors to better position their businesses long-term to meet consumer purchasing preferences for local dairy products that are high quality, natural/organic, and more environmentally sustainable. Grants will range from \$75,000 to \$250,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required. Applications will open in January 2023.

# Application for Trade Show Assistance Grants Opens in December

By Kristen Brassard, VT  
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets welcomes applications from Vermont agricultural and forestry businesses for Trade Show Assistance Grants. These grants provide businesses with funds to identify, plan, exhibit, and sell their

Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual shows targeting out-of-state buyers. These matching grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows, which provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers.

Funding may be used to reimburse up to 50% of the following expenses: travel; marketing assets and

booth design; registration fees; booth fees; furnishings; utilities; shipping/freight; and other marketing costs (samples, printing, etc.). Applicants may include up to five trade shows in their yearly marketing plan, requesting a total of between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements for shows that take place between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024. Businesses may not apply for funding to support attendance at trade shows they have already attended five or more times.

Eligible applicants are Vermont-based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria:

1. Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one year with an address indicating that they perform substantial functions in Vermont;
2. Business has three or more wholesale accounts;
3. Business' products meet the Vermont Local Definition as defined in Act 129.

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has set aside \$50,000 to support Vermont businesses to execute their yearly tradeshow marketing plans. Applications will be reviewed through a competitive process. Eligibility does not guarantee funding will be awarded.

To view the Request for Applications for this opportunity, available beginning December 1, please visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/tradeshow>. The



A row of Vermont businesses exhibiting at a trade show.

application will be open from December 15, 2022 through January 31, 2023.

For questions regarding

this grant opportunity, contact Kristen Brassard at [kristen.brassard@vermont.gov](mailto:kristen.brassard@vermont.gov) or by phone at 802-522-3742.

## Announcing Marketing & Branding Grant Awards

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) Dairy Marketing & Branding Grant recently awarded a total of \$408,630 to 10 dairy farms and processors to work with professional marketing and branding services. Grant recipients spanned the Northeast region, with Vermont represented by Vonn Trapp Farmstead.

With an award of \$40,500, Vonn Trapp Farmstead will contract marketing consultants, photographers, and specialists to create a brand that conveys the quality of their cheese, the value of their organic farming practices, and the story of their third-generation family farm. They'll also use their marketing efforts to elevate Vermont's reputation as a center of artisan dairy production.

The nine other recipients of the Dairy Marketing & Branding Grant include farms in New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine, and Pennsylvania. Grant projects include website development and redesign, ecommerce development, marketing strategy, and the creation of marketing materials to help these farms reach new customers and expand their markets.

For more information about this grant, contact Brockton Corbett at [Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov](mailto:Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov) or (802) 498-5111. The Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant will be available again in the spring of 2023.



### TAX PLANNING & PREPARATION

\*\* Call today for a 2021 Tax Consultation \*\*

KEVIN CHANNELL  
802-249-7384

Kevin@FarmAndForestServices.com  
[www.FarmAndForestServices.com](http://www.FarmAndForestServices.com)



B BASSETTE  
Real Estate Group  
802-457-2244 (office)

### VERMONT LICENSED REALTOR

\*\* Call today for Farm and Real Estate Services \*\*

## VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030: Poultry

**Editor's note:** This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>

**Lead Author:** Kyle Harris, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets  
**Contributing Authors:** Sam Smith, Intervale Center; Bruce Hennessey, Maple Wind Farm; Rob Litch, Misty Knoll Farm

### What's At Stake?

The United States poultry meat industry is one of the most concentrated in the food system, with four poultry companies controlling 60% of the market. Vermont's poultry meat producers compete against industrial poultry prices, and consumer price tolerance is a limit for growth in this field, especially for organic poultry (given high organic feed costs). Added production costs, spatial limitations, and slaughtering considerations present a challenge for Vermont poultry farms who wish to scale up production to meet customer demand beyond their limited direct markets. However, poultry is an enterprise that could pivot with relative ease and help fill gaps in national supply chains as food system vulnerabilities become



apparent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration between producers, processors, lawmakers, and policymakers is needed to take advantage of these gaps, close grey areas in packaging claims, and get Vermont's small-scale poultry producers into regional and metropolitan markets.

### Current Conditions

Vermont has approximately 300 meat poultry producers. They produce over 400,000 birds per year, typically raising birds from early spring to late fall. Poultry is often one of many enterprises on diversified farm operations,

due to the low cost of set-up and the quick turnaround on a salable product.

Vermont has two state-inspected and four USDA-inspected on-farm poultry slaughter and processing facilities (USDA inspection is required to sell across state lines). Five of these facilities slaughter only poultry they have raised, while one offers services to other producers. All other Vermont poultry is slaughtered on-farm with an exemption from state inspection, which restricts how and where birds can be sold, and limits slaughter to under 1,000 birds annually.

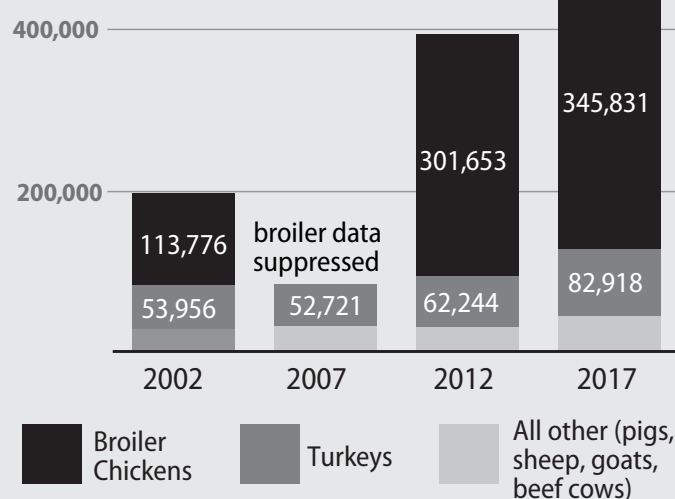
Over the last decade, and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have become increasingly willing to pay a premium to food products that prioritize humane animal practices, environmental considerations, and transparent production claims. Unfortunately, most Vermont producers processing with an on-farm

inspection exemption, who could take advantage of this consumer trend, can only sell birds whole and only on-farm, at local farmers markets, or to local restaurants. Small producers can take their birds to a licensed facility in order to have them processed into specific cuts, but as mentioned above, only one Vermont facility offers this service. On-farm licensed facilities with the ability to process birds raised on other farms struggle with the choice of triggering stricter labor requirements or supporting the success of small poultry operations.

### Bottlenecks & Gaps

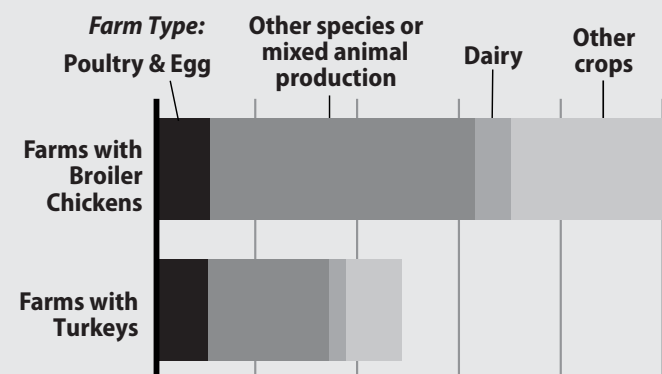
- Feed costs, lack of affordable or appropriately scaled infrastructure, and limited technical assistance make it challenging to scale up production.
- Finding people to work at a wage that makes sense for producers, processors, and hired labor can be challenging.
- Once a producer begins providing slaughter and processing services for birds raised off their farm to other farmers, their facility loses an exemption to federal labor laws, changing the payment structure of overtime for agricultural workers and impacting their business model.
- Values-based product certifications like "pasture-raised" have been exploited by large industrial poultry operations that follow only the bare-minimum requirements, making it difficult for Vermont producers who are committed to the spirit of these practices to sell competitively.
- Consumers are accustomed to purchasing poultry cuts rather than whole birds, which presents challenges for small producers who choose to process their poultry on-farm under the exemption.

**Number Sold of Vermont Livestock Raised for Meat**



**Number of Vermont Farms with Sales of Meat Poultry, 2017, By Farm Type**

The Census of Agriculture categorizes farms by which product makes up over 50% of sales; many farms of all types also produce meat poultry.



## Opportunities

- Consumer trends are supportive of the production practices and values of Vermont's poultry producers. Consumers are looking for lean proteins and other nutrient-dense foods that fit their particular dietary wants and needs.
- Poultry meat and products are consumer favorites, food industry mainstays, and protein powerhouses, even with the recent explosion of plant-based protein alternatives.
- Vermont has approximately 290 poultry producers raising 1,000 or fewer birds and using the on-farm slaughter exemption. If these producers formed an association, it could assist them with peer-



to-peer learning, policy advocacy, marketing, industry expansion, and other needs.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Vermont meat sales significantly increased. As health and climate crises are expected to continue, it is likely that consumers will continue to seek a reliable, local, poultry meat supply.

## Recommendations

- One additional full-time business and technical assistance advisor specializing in small animal livestock production is needed at UVM Extension. The advisor would provide production assistance for poultry operations and other agribusinesses on breeds, nutrition, animal

health, incubation rates, biosecurity practices, and regional and national market access. Cost: \$100,000 annually.

- Vermont's federal delegation should work with the U.S. Department of Labor to adjust overtime rules at processing facilities. Include an exemption authorizing straight time paid to workers for overtime due to processing birds raised off-farm, when that service remains supplemental to the facility business model.
- Funding should be allocated to assist Vermont's poultry farmers in re-forming a producer association to serve the interests of small poultry producers. The

association might create values-based marketing and packaging resources for poultry operations to utilize, assist in member-to-member engagement and consumer education, and be an advocate for Vermont's poultry farmers.

- Industrial poultry operations often do the bare minimum to meet USDA values-based packaging claim requirements. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets should work with Vermont's federal delegation to suggest tighter requirements and bring more transparency to packaging claim regulations for all poultry producers.

## Dairy Farmers

*continued from page 1*

- Agriculture, Food and Markets and the Agency of Natural Resources; and
- The milk producer provides proof of payment of an annual (2023) premium payment for participation in Tier 1 of DMC.
- A milk producer shall apply to the Secretary of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets on or before July 1, 2023, to participate.
- The Secretary shall reimburse eligible applicants in the order in which the Secretary receives administratively complete applications. The Secretary shall have the discretion to determine when an application is administratively complete.
- After funds are exhausted, applicants shall no longer

be eligible for reimbursement from the Secretary unless or until additional funds are appropriated to the Assistance Program.

Notice is being provided to encourage all interested farmers to explore the Dairy Margin Coverage Program and determine if the program is right for their farm.

Reimbursement for the Tier 1 premium will occur after payment in full has been made to USDA. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall reimburse eligible applicants in the order in which the Agency receives administratively complete applications after the payment in full to USDA. After funds are exhausted, applicants shall no longer be eligible for reimbursement from the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets unless

or until additional funds are appropriated to the Assistance Program by the Vermont Legislature.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is working closely with USDA Farm Services Agency on this reimbursement program. For the 2022 program each dairy farmer had to sign a waiver for USDA Farm Services

Agency to share information with VAAFM. These waivers will cover data sharing in 2023.

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program, which replaced the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). The DMC program is a voluntary program that provides dairy operations with risk

management coverage that pays producers when the difference (the margin) between the national price of milk and the average cost of feed falls below a certain level selected by the program participants.

For more information, please contact Diane Bothfeld by email [Diane.Bothfeld@vermont.gov](mailto:Diane.Bothfeld@vermont.gov) or by phone at 802-828-5667.



# Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training: My Experience and Reflections

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

I signed up for the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training Course to better serve Vermont produce farmers through my position with the Vermont Produce Program. The PSA Grower Training Course offers fruit and vegetable growers and others an opportunity to learn about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety.

The PSA Grower Training also satisfies the Produce Safety Rule requirement for covered farms that “at least one supervisor or responsible party” completes food safety training recognized by the Food & Drug Administration (21 CFR § 112.22(c)).

The course is currently offered in-person, online, and via remote delivery. I completed a remote delivery course led in real time by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Completing the course deepened my knowledge of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule and best practices for on-farm food safety. Following the course, held over two afternoons last October, I took away several key findings.

First, I learned about the Food Safety Modernization Act’s focus on preventing foodborne illness through



rules including the Produce Safety Rule (PSR). The PSR establishes science-based food safety standards for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding fruits and vegetables. The training also provides information on which farms are covered by the PSR, excluded, or exempt. Regardless of coverage status, every farmer can benefit from improving their growing, harvesting, and storing practices.

The Grower Training covers topics including worker health and hygiene; soil amendments; animals and land use; agricultural water; post-harvest handling; and developing a farm food safety plan. I found the topic of wildlife, domesticated animals, and land use to be the most interesting as my background is not only in produce farming but also in environmental conserva-

tion. This section covers all outdoor animals. I learned that animals, whether wild or domestic, pose produce safety concerns as they carry certain pathogens that can make people sick. For example, a deer that goes into a production field can contaminate produce by leaving droppings that contain bacteria such

as harmful strains of *E. coli* or Salmonella. Deer can also damage the crop by trampling or feeding on it, which can hurt a farmer’s bottom line. The PSR gives specific recommendations and guidance on how to monitor, manage, and minimize risk of wildlife and domesticated animals on the farm.

To learn more about wildlife, domesticated animals, and land use and other Produce Safety Rule topics, join the Vermont Produce Program and University of Vermont (UVM) Extension next spring for our iteration of the PSA Grower Training Course. Whether you have already attended the training or not, signing yourself, supervisors, or other key employees up will allow you to connect with the Produce Program, Extension, and other producers in the area. This will also help create a culture of food safety not only on the farm, but across Vermont.

Learn more about the Vermont Produce Program at [agriculture.vermont.gov/produce](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/produce). You can also call me at 802-461-6152 or email [kim.burns@vermont.gov](mailto:kim.burns@vermont.gov) to connect one on one. I look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you at the training this spring.

## Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) Request for Applications (RFA) Coming this January!

By Kristina Sweet, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The SCBGP awards grants for projects to benefit specialty crops, defined in the Farm Bill as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops (including Christmas trees), floriculture, herbs and spices, medicinal plants, hops, honey,

maple syrup, and mushrooms.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must describe how a project will benefit a specialty crop industry, a group of producers, or the public rather than a single business or organization.

Visit [agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop) to learn more and access the RFA on January 17, 2023.

# Armstrong Farm – Innovating for Soil and Water Conservation

By Becky Maden,  
UVM Extension

In the 1970s and 80s, Keith Armstrong was a national snowmobile champion, and worked full time for the dairy industry while running the farm on the side. Upon retirement, rather than traveling or relaxing, he decided to do what he truly loved—which is working from dawn to dusk growing high-quality produce.

Now in his 80s, Keith manages a farm located south of Bennington in the town of Pownal with help from his grandchildren. Armstrong Farm's primary crops are maple syrup, sweet corn, and pumpkins, but grows a bit of everything.

Nearly all the farm's products are sold through a small, seasonal stand on Route 7, which has been in Keith's family since 1868. In October, the field next to the stand is piled high with pumpkin displays, luring leaf peepers to pull over, take photos, and hopefully purchase pumpkins and other seasonal goodies.

Although Keith is already an experienced farmer with a deep understanding of soil health, he is enthusiastic and innovative when it comes to new practices. In 2021, while on a visit with Keith, we mentioned a workshop co-hosted by UVM Extension and the Vermont and Vegetable Berry Growers Association on the use of a natural biofumigant called



*Keith Armstrong in a field of pumpkins.*

high glucosinolate mustard (HGM) as a cover crop. Although Keith couldn't attend the workshop, he was immediately intrigued, calling the next day and saying, "I know a good thing when I hear about it!" Within a week, we had ordered and hand spun five acres of HGM seed. And within six weeks, he called again, exclaiming how the stand was blooming and there wasn't a weed in sight. Together, Keith and I flail mowed and then quickly incorporated and sealed in the HGM, according to recommendations for optimizing its biofumigation potential.

This past season, Keith grew sweet corn on the five acres where the HGM had

been planted, and it turned out to be one of his most productive sweet corn crops.

We both attributed the success of the crop to three things; reduction of weeds

due to the HGM, improved soil fertility following a cover crop, and accurate fertilization with chicken manure the previous fall. But Keith wasn't ready to pause to enjoy success; in late July 2022, thanks to support from the CWIP grant, he seeded five acres of HGM and five acres of peas and oats. The peas and oats have grown vigorously and should provide even more biomass and soil health benefits than he experienced with the mustard.

Although Keith is in the process of transferring the farm to the next generation, his enthusiasm for cover cropping and soil health is vibrant. We are excited to continue partnering with Keith, learning from his experience, and helping him steward the soil of his farm.



*Incorporating the high glucosinolate mustard (HGM), which was grown as a cover crop.*

## VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,  
University of Vermont  
Extension  
802-257-7967 ext. 303, or  
[vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu](mailto:vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu)  
[www.vvbga.org](http://www.vvbga.org)

## Reports From The Field

(Huntington) Very little sun plus 9.5" of rain made for a slow September this year, both in terms of fall crop growth and storage crop harvest operations, but at least the weather has been cooperative in October to allow us to catch up. We got a few light frosts in late September, as usual in our valley, but we're still picking cherry tomatoes from unheated tunnels, and sunny days of late have allowed transplanted tunnel kale to continue growing vigorously.

We had our worst onion crop ever this year. They looked better than ever in late June, but things fell apart after that, despite nice weather. Downy mildew showed up, and there was a ton of Fusarium causing in-field and post-harvest losses. I think we need to get more serious about greenhouse sanitation, so we'll see if we can reset the clock with some hours logged behind a pressure washer for the greenhouse infrastructure and some disinfectant dips for seedling trays.

We don't typically worry

much about deer predation on our crops, but the meager wild apple and forest mast crops have had them doing more damage than normal in our fields. In a first for us, we had deer intentionally poking holes in sweet potato row cover and tearing it apart to get at the vines beneath. Like humans, they typically don't like to mess with the stuff.

(Westminster) Our root crop harvest is coming along nicely. Winter squash and radishes are all in; there are still a few weeks left of harvesting beets and carrots. Some turnips and rutabagas, too big for the harvester, are left to dig by hand. Almost all root crops did well this year, with the exception of parsnips, which germinated poorly. Maybe due to dry conditions in June?

This week is the last lettuce harvest. Collards and specialty kales like red and lacinato are finishing up, but we are still shipping large orders of green kale and that should last through November.

Almost all fields have cover crops planted except for those in late-harvested crops where covers wouldn't have time to establish. Five high tunnels are planted with greens for our winter market, which opens mid-December – spinach, salad mix, Asian mix, arugula, and kale.

We raised prices an average of \$2 to \$3 per case this year to reflect higher costs for labor, inputs, and shipping. There were no complaints from our customers; everyone is facing the same inflation. The last Jamaican H2-A employees will leave mid-November, and we're looking to hire a few more local part-time employees for the winter.

(Guildhall) Potato harvest is nearly complete, 3.5 acres to go. We started in on October 11, and have gone nonstop aside from 1 rain day, and a much needed 2-day weekend. Yields have been good, though not last year's historic crop. Quality and sizing have been excellent, and hopefully they continue to remain that way in storage. So far, we've done 72 trucks (200 cwt each) and yields are roughly as follows: golds 325-357 cwt/acre, reds 260 cwt/acre, Peter Wilcox 450 cwt/acre, whites 350 cwt/acre. Last year we made 20' tall piles in the barn out of necessity but suffered quite a bit of bruising because of it. This year we've held most of the piles to 13' to try and lower our cull rate.

(Westminster West) Potato harvest finished, crop has excellent quality and very good yields in all 5 varieties we grow, particularly Carola that customers seem to really like. Bunched carrots about sold out and winter squash all gone, excellent crop this year. Napa wants to get picked real soon, beets being bunched and sold.

A surprise is the celery crop, as we are on the second harvest from the original plant, which never occurred consistently before. A bit behind garlic planting but should get it done this week, about same amount as last year, about all we can handle with the regular crew. Still picking tunnel tomatoes and raspberries! Cover crops seeded and emerging with this great warm weather!

Outdoor farmers' market wrapped up with a record sales year, now for the winter market! Pricing was spotty as increases in our spring plants went fine but pushback on

vegetable price increases during the summer and fall. Disappointing prices from Hannaford's for winter squash, our biggest crop, but great support from co-ops.

(Burlington) Fall harvest is proceeding. Enjoying a top-lifter root harvester for the first time, making note of minor modifications to make this winter. Overall quality and yield of fall crops has been good, with notably low wireworm and root maggot damage, and a low incidence of *Alternaria* in *Brassicas*, likely due to a chilly September. Though the cool and wet month was worrying, our crops caught up during the warmer drier October. I'm always impressed how much growth we can see in the second half of October in a decent autumn.

Summer CSA finished last week with positive feedback from members, and winter CSA opens this week. Always nice to have fewer individuals to manage during our CSA distribution! CSA has a bit of a lag in pricing flexibility, as we are setting our share prices and selling them more than 6 months before giving out any vegetables. After hiking our prices this year by 6 to 8% with zero comments from members, I'm interested whether a second year of steeper share price increases will result in any more comments or attrition. I am guessing not.

This winter we'll be planning for more automation in our tunnel climate controls, streamlining root crop washing, and seeking out the best option to replace our defunct biomass furnace in our greenhouse. Looking forward to catching up with people at conferences as well.

(Elmore) Lots of apples in storage but not so many sales of them. Working with one farmstand and focusing on high quality and bright images near the produce. Had a persimmon harvest in our high tunnel that was looking good until a bear or something climbed the small tree, broke all the branches and ate all the fruit. Perennial vegetable rows continue to feed us with French sorrel making its second crop and sea kale showing a lot of promise. Harvested horseradish; it is so easy to grow and harvest why is it not grown more?

We have not raised prices on anything this year, but all is coming to us at higher prices. When we tried to raise prices on apples, we were told that the big guys are still selling theirs at a much lower price. How to compete with that? Flavor, uniqueness, certified organic and showing up weekly to keep the display looking good.

## New England Vegetable And Fruit Conference December 13-15

The NEVFC being held December 13-15 in Manchester NH offers 25 educational sessions with well over 100 presentations for vegetable, berry, and tree fruit growers. Ornamentals, too. Farmer-to-Farmer meetings after each morning and afternoon session bring speakers and farmers together for informal, in-depth discussion. The Trade Show has over 120 exhibitors. Don't miss this opportunity to obtain ideas and information that will have a positive impact on your farm. Check out the schedule and register at <https://newenglandvfc.org/>

## CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: [Agr.agriview@vermont.gov](mailto:Agr.agriview@vermont.gov), phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

**Cattle**

Beef cow (approx. 1300lb, 3 y/o, open) + calf. Angus x Hereford. Calm, halter broken, fence trained. \$2000 obo. 802-258-7088 (2)

4-year-old angus bull for sale and 6-7-month-old steers and heifers for sale. 802-558-8196 (2)

Two Jersey heifers for sale. Both bottle fed and halter trained. "Charlotte" #68876, born June 29, 2021, sire - "Reckless" "Butterscotch"

- #68960, born in early July 2021, sire - "Whistler" \$1000 each. Email greatbrooknursery@gmail.com, or call 802-454-1856. (2)

**Equipment**

Delaval 1250-gal Bulk Tank. Patz Gutter Cleaner- Counterclockwise, approximately 350 ft of chain. 7630 John Deere Tractor New in 2007 – 3500 hrs. IVT Transmission – Economy PTO Active Seat – Suspended Front End. AX10BIB Tires – Rear View

Camera. 835 John Deere MoCo Mower – Center Pivot New in 2008 – 1000 RPM PTO 11' 6" Cutting Swath. Anderson Bale Wrapper New in 2014 Model RB680 – Honda Engine Handheld Remote Control. Meyers VB440 Vertical Beater manure spreader, new in 2018. Call 802-563-2332 or email [hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com](mailto:hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com) (1)

16 ft New Holland elevator. 38ft John Deere hay elevator. 6.8-ton grain bin. 3pt fertilizer spreader. 802-624-0143 (3)

Tri- axle equipment hauling trailer with pintel hitch. Steel body 8' by 16' with steel frame and treated wood deck. Some rust in frame. Registered in Vt until 9/23. Good rubber. spare tire, pickup pintel hitch, ramps included. \$950 obo. Call or text 802-291-4525 (3)

Cheese Making Equipment: Copper Vat, two pile presses and micro perfs, including all the associated miscellanea required to make an award-winning alpine style cheese. Sold on site. Also, Bison Trail Hand Stock Trailer: looks rough, still tough; we need something bigger. Sold on site. North Pomfret, VT [info@ThistleHillFarm.com](mailto:info@ThistleHillFarm.com). 802-457-1884 (4)

1 solid bottom elevator for wood or sawdust on wheels. 802-624-0143 (4)

**Equine**

Travis sled made from ash with 4' runners. Ready to use in good condition. Kept under cover. Needs pole. \$500 obo. Travis sled with 40" runners. Good condition ready to use. Kept under cover. Needs pole. \$350 obo. Amish built oak horse shoeing stocks in good condition. \$200 obo. Pioneer built large hay wagon with hydraulic brakes Sled runners for winter use. Body built for hauling hay or wagon rides. \$500 obo. Call or text 802-291-4525 (3)

**Hay, Feed & Forage**

400 wrapped bales available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. Call 802-446-2791 (2)

**CHITTENDEN COUNTY**

June cut hay, never wet, will load, 4' x 4' round bales, \$45/bale, quantity discount/ cash prices available. Westford, 802-355-2930 (2)

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**

200 tons certified organic corn silage stored in an ag bag. Will load for you. 180 wrapped 4X4 certified organic round bales 18% protein – price negotiable. Highgate Center, VT 802-868-7535 If no answer, please leave a message. (1)

Certified organic wrapped round bales. The hay is dry, or close to dry. We have forage sample results if interested. Trucking can be arranged. \$45-55/bale depending on which hay is taken. 802-752-5669 (1)

**ORANGE COUNTY**

Large square bales. 1st, 2nd and 3rd cutting plus mulch bales. Wrapped and dry. 1000+ available. Some round bales available too. 802-236-7741 or [csfarm1@gmail.com](mailto:csfarm1@gmail.com) (2)

**WASHINGTON COUNTY**

100+ 4x4 wrapped round bales \$50 each 802-793-3511 (2)

Small square bales – 1st cut \$6.00 or less for quantity. 802-793-3511 (4)

**Wanted**

Co-producer wanted on an organic livestock farm in Danville, Vt. Looking for someone interested in starting their own enterprise with the opportunity to market through our on-farm store. Would barter/hire for assistance with ongoing operations. Currently have capacity to house extra cattle and would entertain other plant and animal production ideas as well. Check out Vt. Landlink listing for Lewis Creek Jerseys for more details. Email [badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com](mailto:badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com) or call Vince at 802-748-8461. (2)

JD 720 diesel with pony motor start. Looking for serial # 7226525. Call or text 802-855-0446 (2)

Fahr KH-4S tedder for parts. Contact Dan @ 802 482-2047 (2)

**For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:**

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: [https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension\\_event\\_calendars](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars)
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: [http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about\\_us/budgets\\_reports](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports)
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: [www.farmfirst.org](http://www.farmfirst.org)
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: [info@vcil.org](mailto:info@vcil.org) or visit: [www.vcil.org](http://www.vcil.org).

For more agricultural events visit our *Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses* webpage at: [http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer\\_partner\\_resources/funding\\_opportunities](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities)

# White Rock Farm Sawmill Poised for Growth with \$250,000 Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Grant

By Clare Salerno, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

**W**hite Rock Farm, LLC in Randolph has been in operation for eight generations since it was founded in 1791. While the farm is still an operational dairy, owner-operators Tim and Janet Angell along with their sons Matt and Joe have been running a sawmill on part of the farm since 2005. With growing demand for local lumber during the pandemic, the family saw a growth opportunity. Earlier this year, White Rock Farm received a \$250,000 grant from the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative to purchase new mill equipment.

With the grant, the Angells will install an automatic mill with an edger and log turner with an off-bearing belt that would carry the lumber to a green chain for sorting. The grant will also support a larger building to



Father and son co-owners Tim and Matt Angell provided a tour of their existing sawmill in August to the Working Lands Enterprise Board.

hold the new set up, as well as a debarker.

Equipment costs in the forest sector often stall growth for small businesses looking to expand. New

mills range in price from \$120,000 to over \$500,000. Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Impact Grants can provide up to \$250,000 to offset these costs for loggers, sawmills, and firewood processors. Equipment upgrades can transform product output, sales, and both jobs and job quality. For example, with the new infrastructure, White Rock Farm will be able to double production. They also currently edge the boards on the main saw and then need to carry the lumber to a truck. The new mill will use a belt to move lumber, reducing the need for as much heavy lifting and improving worker safety. By doubling production to at



Sawed timbers and residual wood bundles at White Rock Sawmill in South Royalton.

least 400,000 board feet a year, White Rock Farm can hire one or two additional full-time staff.

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) funding opportunities are currently open for primary producers

only (logging, livestock rearing, crop production, maple). Please visit [workinglands.vermont.gov](http://workinglands.vermont.gov) to learn more about how WLEI supports agriculture and forestry enterprises around Vermont.

## Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

### Program Phone Numbers

Act 250 .....	802-461-6798
Animal Health .....	802-828-2421
Business Development .....	802-828-1619
Dairy .....	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide ..	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime .....	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration .....	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection .....	802-828-2426
Produce Program .....	802-522-7811
VT Agriculture & Environmental Lab ...	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP .....	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants .....	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports .....	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures .....	802-828-2433
Working Lands .....	802-917-2637



Logs ready for the saw and sawed timbers at the yard by White Rock Sawmill

## \$1 Million Working Lands ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Grant Opportunity Now Open

By Clare Salerno, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Primary producers of farm and forest products can now apply now for the ARPA-Funded Primary Producer grant opportunity! The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) has released a request for applications (RFA) totaling \$1,000,000. This grant opportunity is possible due to federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds appropriated by the Vermont legislature to the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative. The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative anticipates releasing a second ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Grant opportunity in 2023, with available funds of up to \$1,000,000. Examples of eligible primary production activities are farming, livestock rearing, maple sugaring, dairy, and logging.

The goal of the ARPA-Funded Primary Producer grant is to support primary producers in continuing to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their business experienced a negative economic impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic, even if that impact was not sustained (e.g., experienced an increased operational cost, decreased revenue or gross receipts, increased costs,

challenges covering payroll, or other harm that can be linked to the COVID-19 pandemic). Primary producers can use grant funds to invest in market development, infrastructure, processing, and workforce development initiatives that advance their use of the primary products they have produced.

Grant requests for the ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Grant can be from \$50,000 to \$250,000. Please read the request for applications (link below) to learn about eligibility, the application process, and review the application questions. The pre-application deadline is December 16, 2022. Notification of pre-application decisions will occur in early February 2023. Successful applicants will then be invited to submit a full application.

To review the ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Grant request for applications, visit <https://workinglands.vermont.gov/document/FY23-ARPA-RFA>.

Please visit <https://workinglands.vermont.gov/> and <https://www.facebook.com/VTWorkingLands>, for WLEI updates. On the WLEI website, you can sign up for the WLEI mailing list and the weekly Agricultural Development email newsletter. For more information, please contact Clare Salerno at [clare.salerno@vermont.gov](mailto:clare.salerno@vermont.gov) or by phone, 802-917-2537.

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

### Programs Open Year-Round

#### Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley

[Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov](mailto:Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov)

802-828-2431

#### Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour

[Mary.Montour@vermont.gov](mailto:Mary.Montour@vermont.gov)

802-461-6087

#### Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett

[Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov](mailto:Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov)

802-522-4655

#### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos

[Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov](mailto:Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov)

802-461-3814

Phil Wilson

[Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov](mailto:Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov)

802-505-5378

### January

#### Community Supported Agriculture Grant

Reimbursement for the cost of community supported agriculture (CSA) shares for early childcare providers and afterschool programs.

Gina Clithero

[Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov](mailto:Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov)

802-585-6225

### January

#### Dairy Processor Innovation Grant

Grants for long-term business investments that increase processor business consumer appeal and marketability of value-added product

Laura Ginsburg

[laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov](mailto:laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov)

802-522-2252

Kathryn Donovan

[kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov](mailto:kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov)

802-585-4571

### January

#### Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant

Tiered grants for specialized equipment needed to increase processing capacity of regionally produced milk.

Laura Ginsburg

[laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov](mailto:laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov)

802-522-2252

Kathryn Donovan

[kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov](mailto:kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov)

802-585-4571

### January

#### Food Hub Infrastructure Support

Grants to expand capacity and market access for Vermont's nonprofit food hubs.

Julia Scheier

[Julia.Scheier@vermont.gov](mailto:Julia.Scheier@vermont.gov)

802-522-7042

### January

#### Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Grants for collaborative projects to benefit multiple fruit, vegetable, honey, maple, hops, Christmas tree, or nursery crop producers or organizations.

[AGR.SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov)

802-522-7811

### January

#### Trade Show Assistance Grants

Funding for food and forestry businesses to help identify, plan, exhibit, and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state and virtual trade shows.

Kristen Brassard

[kristen.brassard@vermont.gov](mailto:kristen.brassard@vermont.gov)

802-522-3742

# A Young Farmer's Take on Agriculture in Vermont

By Annika Fuller, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (2021), only 8% of US farmers are under 35 years old. At 26 years old, Brian McGarry is part of the 8%. While other young people are working office jobs or waiting a couple more years to find a place to settle down in, McGarry has found dedication and purpose in his farm, specifically through his dairy cows.

"Cows are pretty interesting creatures. And ours are pretty docile and friendly," McGarry said when asked what his favorite parts of farming are.

Brian McGarry grew up on his family farm, McGarry Dairy, in Franklin County. He later decided to go to Virginia Tech to get a degree in Dairy Science with the intention to return and take over his parent's farm. Before returning to run the farm, McGarry also worked on farms in New York and Maryland. While away, he saw success with no-till farming and wanted to implement the practice when he returned to Vermont.

"No till really improved their soil and they saw reduced economic costs and were helping the environment with less erosion and more nutrients staying in the soil," McGarry said.



McGarry Dairy owners Ed (left), Diane and Brian McGarry. McGarry Dairy was the 2021 Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year.

With the help of the Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) grant, awarded through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Brian McGarry moved the farm away from the tradition of disk-ing the soil to no-till. FAP also helped McGarry begin manure injecting. Through these practices, he's reduced nitrogen fertilizer use and had a slight uptick in yield. Even as the farm has expanded, he is still buying less fertilizer and grain than ever before. And with the success of the FAP grant, he's started looking at other grants offered through the agency.

Being able to implement these conservation practices is meaningful to McGarry because he sees these practices as not only helping the environment but also the economic side of his business.

"I try to balance economic and environmental benefits when making decisions in general. They seem to go hand in hand a lot since we work in the environment," McGarry said.

While this mentality may surprise some non-farmers, McGarry believes economic benefits drive many farmers-- but they are happy to see when their practices help the environment as well. This is especially true as the climate shifts and Vermont experiences an increase in extreme weather events. Due to climate change, Vermont is projected to experience wetter springs and falls and drier summers. Conservation practices, such as the no-till that McGarry is implementing, increase farm resilience to the increasingly unpredictable precipitation patterns that we have already started to see in the Northeast.

Even with these thoughts on other farmers on his mind, McGarry says the public's perception of what farmers are doing versus what they are doing is one challenge he sees the agriculture community facing. While he admits farming has some adverse effects on the environment, not all farming practices are degrading the land and water in ways the public may believe. McGarry

wants the distance the public has from farming to shrink.

Nonetheless, McGarry's appreciation for his farm and community outweighs the climate and social challenges. From his neighbors who have helped him understand his crops better to his excitement around pairing new technology with traditional farming methods, McGarry believes this way of life is "a pretty good fit."



McGarry Dairy holsteins.

# NEW! Up to 100% Cost Share for Farm and Forestland Practices

By Kait Jones, VT Department of Environmental Conservation

Thanks to a collaboration between the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the USDA/NRCS under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), you may now be eligible for up to 100% cost share on some conservation practices, including grazing, forestry practices (that address water quality), agronomic practices, feed management, and easements. Ten million dollars in assistance to farm and forest landowners is available under this RCPP through 2026 to increase the implementation of agricultural and forestry

best management practices (BMPs), wetland restoration, and conservation easements that improve and protect water quality. All Vermont farm and forest landowners are eligible, though priority in some areas is given to smaller landowners and parcels.

This RCPP program not only boasts a higher cost-share per funded practice than traditional Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP), it also places applicants seeking funding under this program into a separate ranking pool from EQIP. Which means to you, that your chances of your application being selected increases. In addition, since RCPP is not affected by the EQIP Farm Bill payment limitation,

farmers who have reached the \$450K EQIP spending cap may still be eligible under this RCPP program.

Applications to the RCPP program are due January 13, 2023.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has contracted with Redstart and the VT Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) to provide technical assistance to help you with assessments and planning and to make sure that you participate in the program where it makes the most sense for you.

For more information, visit DEC's RCPP page or contact Kait Jones by email [kaitlyn.jones@vermont.gov](mailto:kaitlyn.jones@vermont.gov) or by phone at 802-505-1635.

## National Agricultural Statistics Service's Census of Agriculture

*Your Voice, Your Future, Your Opportunity*

From USDA

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Census of Agriculture just once every five years, and it's that time again. The ag census remains the only source of comprehensive agriculture data for every U.S. farm, ranch, and person who operates them in every state and county in the nation. The ag census includes even the smallest plots and operations, rural or urban. As long as \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, in the census year, that is considered a farm to be counted.

The millions of data points produced by the Census of Agriculture are used by decision makers at federal and local levels, agribusinesses, researchers, trade associations, and many others who serve producers and rural communities through the creation and funding of agricultural programs and services – decisions that directly affect ag producers and shape the future of the industry.

USDA NASS will mail the 2022 Census of Agriculture to more than three million U.S. producers with the response deadline of February 6, 2023. The information that you share in the Census of Agriculture is represented in this widely used and influential data.

The new ag census data will be available Spring/Summer 2024 in aggregate form only to ensure that no individual operation or producer can be identified. The data will be available in electronic formats for the nation as well as all states, counties, and Puerto Rico. Ag census data collection for the other U.S. territories will commence in 2024.

For more information and regular updates about the ag census, please visit [www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus)



## Maple 100 Success

By Kristen Brassard, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets extends an \*extra sweet\* thank you to all who participated in this year's Vermont Maple 100! From September 15-October 15, the Maple 100 brought Vermonters and out-of-state visitors alike to businesses across the state for a variety of experiences in celebration of maple. From creemees to cocktails, sugarhouse

tours to foliage hikes, craft beer to dog treats, and concerts to farm dinners – the Maple 100 offered something for everyone. The event was promoted with a robust regional marketing campaign through Premion, which advertised to three out-of-state metropolitan markets: Worcester/Boston, Albany, and New York City. Advertisements received 414,000 impressions reaching 295,000 households.

Consumers were invited to participate in a Bingo

game, which encouraged them to participate in a variety of maple-related experiences. One lucky winner won a Maple Basket from Lake Champlain Chocolates.

We are currently gathering participant and stakeholder feedback and look forward to working with our partners to continue to grow and improve this event in the coming years. Stay tuned this spring for updates on how to get involved in next year's event!

# 'Fantastic Farmer' Award Headlines Efforts to Support Vermont Farmers

*A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund backs three important programs with significant awards*

Scott Waterman, VT  
Agency of Agriculture,  
Food & Markets

**O**n a hillside in Chittenden, Vermont, a 104 year-old family-farm surrounded by a forest of maples has earned the second annual 'Fantastic Farmer' title and a significant award of \$5000 from the A.Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation.

Jenna Baird of Baird Farm Maple was chosen to receive this special award for her commitment to sustainable agriculture,



land-use diversity, and environmental stewardship. Jenna, her partner Jacob Powsner, and extended family also raise Christmas trees and cut flowers, as well as hosting a local beef cattle operation.

"This award lifts up the work of farmers in our rural Vermont economy. Often that work goes unseen, so

we feel this award is so important because it celebrates that real food comes from real farms," said Jenna Baird. "This award will be put to good use so that on our farm we can continue to make



and share our food and products with Vermonters and tourists alike!"

The 'Fantastic Farmer' title is the latest award this year supported by the A.Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. Including the Vermont Barn Painting Project and the Milk Quality Awards, the mission

of the Fund is to support farmer efforts to grow their business, cultivate, and deliver their products to the consumer, in a way that respects the heritage, culture, and stewardship that our farmers and farming community strive for every day.

To nominate or apply for the 2023 Vermont Fantastic Farmer Award, please visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/fantastic-farmer-award>


For more information about the program, please contact: Scott Waterman by email, [scott.waterman@vermont.gov](mailto:scott.waterman@vermont.gov) or by phone at 802-622-4662.

**Wood Ash**

Cost efficient, OMRI Listed®, fast-acting soil liming, organic source of potassium, magnesium, calcium and zinc that naturally improves soil pH

RMI partners with farms throughout Vermont to **BUILD HEALTHY SOILS**



Call 603-536-8900 and mention this ad for 5% off your next order!\*

\*Discount valid through end of 2022

## Grow Produce?

### Sign up for the Vermont Produce Portal

**Request a Free On-Farm Food Safety Assessment**

**Access Produce Safety Improvement Grants**

**Early registration for Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training**

**AGRICULTURE.VERMONT.GOV/PRODUCE**

**VERMONT  
PRODUCE  
PROGRAM**

